اِنَّ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ يَهْدِيْ لِلَّتِيْ هِيَ اَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ يَعْمَلُوْنَ الصّٰلِحٰتِ اَنَّ لَهُمْ اَجْرًا كَبِيْرًا

Quran English Translation and Tafseer
Sayyid Abul Ala Mawdudi

Surah Al-Falaq (Dawn) -113

سُوْرَةُ الْفَلَقِ مَكِّيَّةٌ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

(In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate)

قُلْ اَعُوْذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ ١

(113:1) Say: (1) “I seek refuge (2) with the Lord of the rising day; (3)

(1) As qul (say) is a part of the message which was conveyed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) by revelation for preaching his prophetic message, its first addressee is the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself but after him every believer is also its addressee.

(2) The act of seeking refuge necessarily consists of three parts:

(1) The act of seeking refuge itself.

(2) The seeker of refuge.

(3) He whose refuge is sought.

Seeking refuge implies feeling fear of something and seeking protection of another, or taking cover of it, or clinging to it, or going under its shelter for safety. The seeker after refuge in any case is the person, who feels that he cannot by himself resist and fight the thing that he fears, but stands in need of refuge with another for protection. Then the one whose refuge is sought must necessarily be a person or being about whom the seeker after refuge believes that he or it alone can protect him from the calamity. Now, one kind of refuge is that which is obtained according to natural laws in the physical world from a perceptible material object or person or power, for example, taking shelter in a fort for protection against the enemy’s attack, or taking cover in

a trench or behind a heap of earth, or wall, for protection against a shower of bullets, or taking refuge with a man or government, for protection from a powerful tyrant or taking refuge in the shade of a tree or building for protection from the sun. Contrary to this, the other kind of refuge is that which is sought in a supernatural Being from every kind of danger and every kind of material, moral or spiritual harm and injury on the basis of the belief that that Being is ruler over the physical world and can protect in supersensory ways the one who seeks His refuge. This second kind of refuge is the one that is implied not only in Surah Al-Falaq and Surah An-Nass but wherever in the Quran and the Hadith mention has been made of seeking refuge with Allah, it implies this particular kind of refuge, and it is a necessary corollary of the doctrine of Tauhid that this kind of refuge should be sought from no one but Allah. The polytheists sought this kind of protection, and seek even today, from other beings than Allah, e.g. the jinn, or gods and goddesses. The materialists also turn for this to material means and resources, for they do not believe in any supernatural power. But the believer only turns to Allah and seeks refuge only with Him, against all such calamities and misfortunes to ward off which he feels he has no power.

For example, about the polytheists it has been said in the Quran: And that from among men some people used to seek refuge with some people from among the jinn (Surah Al-Jinn, Ayat 16).

And explaining it in (E.N. 7 of Surah Al-Jinn)we have cited Abdullah bin Abbas's tradition that when the polytheistic Arabs had to pass a night in an uninhabited valley, they would call out, saying: We seek refuge of the lord of this valley (i.e. of the jinn who is ruler and master of this valley). Contrary to this, about Pharaoh it has been said: When he witnessed the great signs presented by the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), he showed arrogance on account of his might. (Surah Adh- Dharuyat, Ayat 39).

As for the attitude and conduct of the God-worshippers the Quran says that they seek Allah's refuge for protection against the evil of everything that they fear, whether it is material or moral or spiritual. Thus, about Mary it has been said that when God's angel appeared before her suddenly in human guise (when

she did not know that he was an angel), she cried out: I seek the merciful God's refuge from you, if you are a pious man. (Surah Maryam, Ayat 18).

When the Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) made an improper petition to Allah, and was rebuked by Allah in response, he immediately submitted: My Lord, I seek Your protection lest I should ask of You anything of which I have no knowledge. (Surah Hud, Ayat 47) When the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) commanded the children of Israel to sacrifice a cow, and they said that perhaps he was having a jest with them, he replied: I crave Allah's protection from behaving like ignorant people. (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 67).

The same is the case with all the acts of seeking refuge which have been reported in respect of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the books of Hadith. For instance, consider the following prayers that the Prophet (peace be upon him) made:

Aishah has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to pray, saying: O God, I seek Your refuge from the evil of the works which I did and from the evil of the works which I did not do. (i.e. if I have done a wrong, I seek refuge from its evil results, and if I have not done a work which I should have done, I seek refuge from the loss that I have incurred, or from that I should do what I should not do). (Muslim).

Ibn Umar has reported that one of the supplications of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was to the effect: O God, I seek Your refuge from being deprived of a blessing that You have bestowed on me and from being deprived of the well-being that You have granted me and I seek refuge lest Your wrath should descend on me suddenly, and I seek refuge from every kind of Your displeasure. (Muslim).

> Zaid bin Arqam has reported that the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah used to pray: O God, I seek Your refuge from the knowledge which is not beneficial, from the heart which does not fear You, from the soul which is never

satisfied, and from the prayer which is not answered. (Muslim).

Abu Hurairah has reported that the Messenger (peace be upon him) used to pray: O God, I seek Your refuge from hunger, for it is a most evil thing with which one may have to pass a night, and I seek Your refuge from dishonesty, for it is sheer evil-mindedness. (Abu Daud).

Anas has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to pray: O God, I seek Your refuge from leprosy and madness and all evil diseases. (Abu Daud).

Aishah has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to pray in these words: O God, I seek Your refuge from the mischief of the fire and from the evil of affluence and poverty. (Tirmidhi, Abu Daud).

Shakal bin Humaid requested the Prophet (peace be upon him) to teach him some prayer. He told him to say: O God, I seek Your refuge from the evil of my hearing, from the evil of my sight, from the evil of my tongue, from the evil of my heart, and from the evil of my lust, (Tirmidhi, Abu Daud).

Atlas bin Malik has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to say: O God, I seek Your refuge from helplessness, indolence, cowardice, old age and stinginess, and I seek Your refuge from the torment of the grave and from the mischief of life and death, (and according to a tradition in Muslim also) from the burden of debt and that the people should overpower me. (Bukhari, Muslim).

Khawla bint Hukaym Sulamiyyah says that she heard the Prophet (peace be upon him) as saying that the one who halts at a new stage (during the journey) and says: I seek refuge in the blameless words of Allah from the evil of the creatures, will not be caused any harm until he departs from that stage. (Muslim).

We have related these few prayers of the Prophet (peace be upon him) from the Hadith, which show that the believer should

seek Allah's refuge from every danger and evil and not the refuge of anyone else, nor he should become self sufficient of Allah and place reliance only on himself.

(3) The word used in the original is Rabbil-Falaq. Falaq actually means to split and to pierce through. A great majority of the commentators have taken it to mean bringing out the light of dawn by splitting the darkness of night, for in Arabic falaq-as-subh is often used for the breaking of dawn, and also in the Quran the words Faliqul- isbah (He Who causes the dawn to appear by splitting the darkness of night) have been used for Allah. (Surah AlAnaam, Ayat 96).

Another meaning of Falaq is also to create to bring into being, for everything created in the world appears by splitting something. All vegetation sprouts by splitting open the seed and the soil; all animals come out either from the womb of mother or by breaking open the egg, or some other obstruction. All springs gush out by splitting open the rock or soil. The day appears by piercing through the curtain of the night. The drops of rain pierce through the clouds and fall on the earth. In short, everything in the world comes into being as a result of breaking and splitting another thing; so much so that the earth and the heavens also in the beginning were one mass, then they were broken and parted. (Surah Al-Anbiya, Ayat 30).

Thus, according to this meaning the word Falaq is common to all creations. Now, if the first meaning is adopted, the verse would mean: I seek refuge with the Lord of rising dawn, and according to the second meaning, it would mean: I seek refuge with the Lord of all creation. Here the attribute of Rabb has been used for Allah instead of His proper Name, for Allah's attribute of being Rabb, i.e. Master, Sustainer and Provider, is more relevant to seeking and taking of His refuge. Then, if Rabb-ul-Falaq implies Lord of the rising dawn, seeking His refuge would mean: I seek refuge with the Lord Who brings out the bright daylight from the darkness of night so that He may likewise bring well-being for me from all kinds of physical and psychical dangers. If it is taken to mean Rabb al-Khaliq the meaning would be: I seek refuge with

the Lord of all creation, so that He may protect me from the evil of His creation.

مِن شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ ﴿٢﴾

(113:2) from the evil of all that He created; (4)

(4) In other words: I seek His refuge from the evil of all creatures. A few things in this sentence deserve consideration.

First, that the creation of evil has not been attributed to Allah, but the creation of creatures has been attributed to Allah and of evil to the creatures. That is, it has not been said: I seek refuge from the evils that Allah has created, but that: I seek refuge from the evil of the things He has created. This shows that Allah has not created any creature for the sake of evil, but all His work is for the sake of good and a special purpose. However, from the qualities that He has created in the creatures to fulfill the purpose of their creation, sometimes evil appears from some kinds of creatures in most cases.

Second, that even if this one sentence was given and no mention made of seeking Allah's refuge separately from the evils of some particular kinds of creatures in the following sentences, this one sentence alone would have sufficed to express the intent, for in it Allah's refuge has been sought from the evil of all creatures. After this general prayer for refuge making mention of seeking refuge from some particular evils by itself gives this meaning: Though I seek Allah's refuge from the evil of everything created by Allah, I stand in great need of Allah's refuge from the particular evils that have been mentioned in the remaining verses of Surah Al-Falaq and Surah An-Nass.

Third, that the most suitable and effective prayer for seeking refuge from the evil of the creatures is that refuge should be sought with their Creator, for He is in any case dominant over His creatures and is aware of their evils, which we know, as well as of those which we do not know. Hence, His refuge is the refuge of the supreme Ruler Whom no power can fight and oppose, and

with His refuge we can protect ourselves from every evil of every creature, whether we are aware of it or not. Moreover, this contains the prayer for refuge not only from the evils of the world but also from every evil of the Hereafter.

Fourth, that the word sharr (evil) is used for loss, injury, trouble and affliction as well as for the means which cause losses and injuries and afflictions; for example, hunger, disease, injury in accident or war, being burnt by fire, being stung or bitten by a scorpion or snake, being involved in the grief of children's death and similar other evils which are evils in the first sense, for they are by themselves troubles and afflictions. Contrary to this, unbelief, polytheism and every kind of sin and wickedness, for instance, are evils in the second sense, for they cause loss and affliction, although apparently they do not cause any trouble at the moment, rather some sins give pleasure and bring profit. Thus, seeking refuge from evil comprehends both these meanings.

Fifth, that seeking refuge from evil also contains two other meanings. First, that man is praying to his God to protect him from the evil that has already taken place; second, that man is praying to his God to protect him from the evil that has not yet taken place.

وَمِن شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ إِذَا وَقَبَ ۝٣

(113:3) from the evil of night's darkness when it spreads around; (5)

(5) After seeking Allah's refuge generally from the evil of the creatures, now prayer is being taught for seeking refuge from the evil of some special creatures in particular. The word ghasiq in the verse literally means dark. Thus, at another place in the Quran it has been said: Establish the salat from the declining of the sun to the darkness of the night, ila-ghasaq-il-lail. (Surah Bani Israil, Ayat 78), and waqab means to enter or to overspread. Prayer has been taught to seek refuge in particular from the evil of the darkness of night, for most of the crimes and acts of wickedness are committed at night, harmful animals also come out at night, and the night was a very dreadful thing in the time chaos prevailed in Arabia when these verses were revealed. Raiders came out in the dark of night and plundered and destroyed settlements. The people who were thinking of putting the Prophet (peace be upon him) to death, also made their secret plans at night, so that the murder could not be detected. Therefore, command was given to seek Allah's refuge from the evils and calamities which descend at night. Here, the subtle relation that exists between seeking refuge from the evil of the dark night with the Lord of breaking dawn cannot remain hidden from anybody having insight and understanding.

A difficulty is confronted in the explanation of this verse in view of several authentic traditions. Aishah has reported: Once during a moon-lit night, the Prophet (peace be upon him) took hold of my hand and pointing to the moon said: Seek Allah's refuge, for this is al ghasiq idha waqab. (Tirmidhi, Ahmad, Nasai, Ibn Jarir, Ibn al-Mundhir, Hakim, Ibn Marduyah). To explain this some scholars said that idha waqab here means idha khasaf, i.e. when the moon is eclipsed. But in no tradition has it been mentioned that when the Prophet (peace be upon him) pointed to the moon, it was in eclipse. In the Arabic lexicon also idha waqab cannot mean idha khasaf. In our opinion the correct explanation

of this Hadith is that since the moon rises in the night (in the daytime it does not shine even if it is there in the sky), what the Prophet (peace be upon him) meant was this: Seek God's refuge from the night, the time when it (the moon) appears, for the light of the moon is not as helpful for the one who resists as for the one who attacks, and not as helpful for the victim of the crime as for the culprit. On this very basis the Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have said: When the sun has set, devils spread on every side. Therefore, gather your children together in the house and keep your animals tied down until the darkness of night disappears.

وَمِن شَرِّ النَّفَّٰثَٰتِ فِى الْعُقَدِ ﴿٤﴾

(113:4) from the evil of the women who blow on knots; (6)

(6) The word uqad in naffathat fil-uqad is plural of uqdah, which means a knot that is tied on a string or piece of thread. Nafath means to blow. Naffathat is plural of naffathah, which may mean the men who blow much, and if taken as a feminine gender, women who blow much; it may as well relate to nufus (human beings) or to jamaats (groups of men), for both nafas and jamaat are grammatically feminine. Blowing upon knots, according to most, rather all, commentators imply magic, for the magicians usually tie knots on a string or thread and blow upon them as they do so. Thus, the verse means: I seek refuge with the Lord of rising dawn from the evil of magicians, male and female. This meaning is also supported by the traditions which show that when magic was worked on the Prophet (peace be upon him), Gabriel had come and taught him to recite the Muawwidhatayn, and in the Muawwidhatayn this is the only sentence which relates directly to magic. Abu Muslim Isfahani and Zamakhshari have also given another meaning of naffathat fil-uqad, which is that it implies the deceitfulness of women and their influencing men's resolutions, views and ideas and this has been compared to a magic spell, for in the love of women man starts behaving as if he

was under a spell. Though this explanation is interesting, it runs counter to the commentary given by the earlier scholars; and it also does not correspond to the conditions in which the Muawwidhatayn were sent down as we have shown in the Introduction.

About magic one should know that in it since help is sought of the satans and evil spirits or stars to influence the other person evilly, it has been called kufr (unbelief) in the Quran: Solomon was not involved in kufr but the satans who taught magic to the people. (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 102).

But even if it does not contain any word of kufr, or any polytheistic element, it is forbidden and unlawful and the Prophet (peace be upon him) has counted it among the seven heinous sins which ruin the Hereafter of man. In Bukhari and Muslim a tradition has been related from Abu Hurairah, saying that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Avoid seven deadly sins: associating another with Allah, magic, killing a soul unjustly which Allah has forbidden, devouring interest, eating the orphan's property, fleeing from the enemy in the battlefield, and slandering simple and chaste Muslim women with un-chastity.

وَ مِن شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ اِذَا حَسَدَ ۝٥

(113:5) and from the evil of the envier when he envies." (7)

(7) Hasad means that a person should feel unhappy at the better fortune, superiority or good quality that Allah has granted to another, and should wish that it should be taken away from the other person and given to him, or at least the other one should be deprived of it. However, hasad does not mean that a person should wish that he too should be blessed with the bounty that the other one has been blessed with. Here, Allah's refuge has been sought from the evil of the jealous one when he feels jealous, and takes a practical step with word or deed to satisfy his heart. For until he takes a practical step, his being unhappy may by itself be bad but it is not an evil for the other person so that he may seek refuge from it. When such an evil appears from a

jealous person the best thing would be to seek Allah’s refuge from it. Besides this, there are a few other things which are also helpful for obtaining immunity from the evil of the jealous person. First, that one should have trust in Allah and the faith that unless Allah so wills no one can harm him in any way. Second, that one should have patience over what the jealous person says and does and should not start behaving impatiently so as to be degraded morally to the level of the jealous person. Third, that one should in any case maintain dignity and practice piety even if the jealous person behaves frivolously, being fearless of God and shameless of the people. Fourth, that one should free his mind of every thought about the jealous person and should disregard him altogether, for making him a subject of one’s thought is a prelude to being influenced by him. Fifth, that one should do the jealous person a good turn as and when one can, not to speak of treating him evilly, no matter whether this good behavior mitigates his jealousy or not. Sixth, that one should understand rightly and remain steadfast to the doctrine of Tauhid for the heart which enshrines Tauhid, cannot be affected by anyone else’s fear except the fear of Allah